

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUCHAR 02231 240952Z

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FM AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8826

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

S E C R E T BUCHAREST 2231

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, RO, BU, XH

SUBJECT: RUMOR CONCERNING ALLEGED PLAN TO AMALGAMATE
BULGARIA WITH USSR

1. TRUSTWORTHY NATO-COUNTRY EMBASSY OFFICER HAS TOLD US OF "RUMOR" REPORTEDLY CIRCULATING IN ROMANIAN OFFICIAL CIRCLES (BUT WHICH BOTH OUR NATO SOURCE AND WE REGARD WITH GREAT SKEPTICISM) TO EFFECT THAT ZHIVKOV'S TRIP TO MOSCOW AND CEAUSESCU'S ENSUING VISIT TO BULGARIA CONCERNED INTER ALIA THE POSSIBLE ENTRY OF BULGARIA INTO THE USSR AS THE SIXTEENTH SOVIET REPUBLIC AND THE FORMATION OF A "CORRIDOR" THROUGH ROMANIA IN THIS CONNECTION.

2. NATO EMBASSY'S ROMANIAN SOURCE ALSO REMARKED UPON MILITARY MANEUVERS IN BULGARIA (IN THE NATO DIPLOMAT'S VIEW, TO BOLSTER HIS CREDIBILITY) AND UPON ROMANIAN RESERVE CALLUPS HE HAD NOTICED, E.G., AMONG INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL SERVICE STAFF. ROMANIAN SOURCE WAS SKEPTICAL ABOUT "CORRIDOR" ELEMENT OF RUMOR. NATO EMBASSY SAYS SOURCE HAS 80-PERCENT RELIABILITY RATING.

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PAGE 02 BUCHAR 02231 240952Z

3. COMMENT: PRESENT RUMOR RECALLS NUMBER OF REPORTS FROM OTHER PLACES LAST YEAR ALLEGING THAT "HIGHER STAGE" OF RELATIONS ENVISAGED BETWEEN USSR AND BULGARIA, OF WHICH "SIXTEENTH REPUBLIC" WAS MOST SIMPLISTIC VARIATION. "CORRIDOR" IDEA WOULD BE LOGICAL EXTENSION, IF ONLY IN SENSE OF CONCESSIONARY PASSAGE RIGHTS FOR SOVIET GOODS AND PERSONS INCLUDING MILITARY. WHILE RUMOR MAY HAVE SOME TOUCH WITH REALITY, WE FIND IT INTERESTING PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF ITS ALLEGED RESONANCE IN ROMANIAN "OFFICIAL CIRCLES" WHICH WE WOULD TAKE TO MEAN SEMI-INFORMED LOWER AND MIDDLE LEVELS OF BUREAUCRACY, ALTHOUGH EVEN VERY TOP LEVELS WOULD BE CONCERNED AT SIGNS OF STILL CLOSER BULGARIAN INTEGRATION WITH USSR. IN ANY CASE, IT WOULD BE ILLUSTRATION OF TENDENCY FOR GRAPEVINE NERVIUSLY TO WRITHE AT MOMENTS OF UNCERTAINTY IN ROMANIA'S DEALINGS WITH MOSCOW. WE WOULD ALSO NOT DISCOUNT POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH A RUMOR COULD HAVE ORIGINATED FROM SOME FOREIGN SOURCE WITH DISINFORMATION INTEREST IN MIND, EITHER TO DISCREDIT SOVIETS (CHINESE) OR TO CAUSE DISQUIET (SOVIETS THEMSELVES). IN ANY CASE, WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF SUBSTANCE FROM WHAT WE KNOW HERE INCLUDING ALLEGATIONS OF RESERVE CALL-UPS, FOR WHICH DAO HAS SEEN NO SUPPORT WHATSOEVER DESPITE RECENT EXTENSCHIE TRIP.

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